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With Mr. Ashby's compts

Borough of Reading.

URBAN SANITARY AUTHORITY.

Twenty-second Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health FOR THE YEAR 1894,

Pursuant to the Regulations of the Local Government Board.

Town Hall, Reading,
February 9th, 1895.

To the Reading Urban Sanitary Authority.

Gentlemen,

In presenting to you the Twenty-second Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year ended December 31st, 1894, I have to address you as in former years, since, unlike that of other Sanitary Authorities, your style or title as the Sanitary Authority of a County Borough has not been changed by the Local Government Act, 1894.

Meteorology.

The weather of the year was such as to cause a low death rate, the cool wet summer having been favourable to infant life and childhood, whilst the mild winter spared old age.

The observations on the temperature and rainfall given in the accompanying table were made by the Rev. Alan Cheales at "Ellerslie," Tilehurst Road, and he has kindly placed them at my disposal for the purpose of this report.

Month.	Shade Temperatures.					Rainfall.			
	Highest by Day.	Lowest by Night.	Range in Month.	Mean of all highest.	Mean of all lowest.	Total Depth.	Greatest fall in 24 hours.		No. of days on which ·01in. or more fell.
	Deg.	Deg.	Deg.	Deg.	Deg.	Inches.	Inches.	Date.	Days.
January	53	12	41	42·9	33·8	2·71	0·27	30th	21
February... ...	56	23	33	46·9	34·7	1·62	0·68	17th	13
March	63	28	35	51·6	36·0	1·21	0·23	1st	10
April	70	34	36	59·1	41·9	1·52	0·45	24th	14
May...	66	32	34	57·4	40·9	1·75	0·39	29th	14
June	80	42	38	65·2	50·5	2·36	0·65	3rd	13
July...	84	51	33	70·3	54·8	3·04	0·67	29th	22
August	75	45	30	66·6	53·1	3·04	1·01	24th	15
September ..	67	35	32	51·9	47·8	2·21	0·69	7th	11
October	62	33	29	55·2	43·3	4·42	1·47	30th	20
November ...	60	32	28	50·9	40·4	4·57	1·07	14th	15
December ...	57	22	35	45·5	35·9	2·31	0·85	14th	17
The year ...	84	12	72	55·3	42·8	30·76	1·47	—	185

The new year began with severe cold and frosts which lasted nine days, and then gave way to milder weather. In February, March, and April the temperature was above the average, and the rainfall was low ; but these conditions were reversed at the beginning of May when there were five successive months deficient in warmth, with the exception of a spell of hot weather in the last week of June and the first of July, when the temperature was from 80 degrees to 84 degrees on six days. This cold period was followed by a mild October, November, and December, the last nine weeks of the year, except on a few days, having been unusually warm. The range of temperature for the whole year was large, having amounted to 72 degrees. The greatest monthly range was 41 degrees in January, and the least 28 degrees in November.

Rain fell on 185 days, decidedly above the average number. The rainfall was in excess in January, June, July, August, October, and November. The last named two months were by far the wettest, 4·42in. and 4·57in. having fallen in them. The heavy rains in November were confined to the first sixteen days ; about 3in. fell between the 11th and 14th, causing the greatest flood of modern times, which lasted from the 14th to the 17th, and then began to subside.

The highest flood level at Reading in November was 127·71 above ordnance datum, and in October, 1891, it was 124·82. The summer level of the Thames above Caversham Lock is 120·5, so in last years' flood the water rose about $7\frac{1}{4}$ feet and in the flood of 1891 about $4\frac{1}{3}$ feet above the summer river level.

Vital Statistics.

The borough comprises an area of 5,878 statute acres. At the census of 1891 it contained 11,461 inhabited houses, with a population of 60,054; so the average number of persons in each house was 5·24.

The population estimated to the middle of the year was 64,109.

During the year 1014 persons were married*; 925 males and 919 females were born; and 497 males and 416 females died in your district.

There were 15·82 persons married to every 1,000 living.

The total number of births registered was 1844; so the birth rate was 28·76 per 1,000 of the population. This was 3·27 per 1,000 below the average of the ten years preceding, which was 32·03.

The deaths of five males and four females which happened in Moulsford Lunatic Asylum amongst persons who had been admitted from the limits of the borough must be added to the registered deaths.

The 44 deaths in the Workhouse all occurred amongst persons who were inhabitants of Reading, so no correction has to be made on account of them.

There were 101 deaths in the Royal Berkshire Hospital and two in the Helena Nursing Home, from which must be deducted the deaths of 27 males and 18 females in the Hospital, and one female in the Nursing Home, which took place amongst persons who had been admitted into those institutions from without the borough.

The deaths of three males in the prison must also be deducted, as they happened to prisoners who did not belong to this district.

The deaths due to the borough were, therefore, 472 of males, and 401 of females, giving a total of 873; and the death rate at all ages was 13·62 per 1,000 persons living, which was 2·94 below the ten years' average of 16·56.

Of the corrected number of deaths 296 occurred under five years of age, 34 at five and under fifteen, 48 at fifteen and under twenty-five, 193 at twenty-five and under fifty-five, 92 at fifty-five and under sixty-five, and 210 at sixty-five and upwards.

In the following table are shown under these age-groups the number of males, females, and persons estimated to be living at the middle of 1894, the deaths at each age-group, and the deaths per 1,000 living at each age-group.

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* I am indebted to the courtesy of the superintendent registrar of the district for the information about marriages.

	All ages.	0 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 55	55 and under 65	65 and upwards.
			Ages.				
Numbers living at each Age-Group estimated to the middle of 1894.							
Males	31294	4177	7409	5910	11192	1461	1145
Females ..	32815	4088	7414	6153	11806	1778	1576
Persons ..	64109	8265	14823	12063	22998	3239	2721
Deaths at each Age-Group.							
Males	472	175	20	26	100	54	97
Females ..	401	121	14	22	93	38	113
Persons ..	873	296	34	48	193	92	210
Deaths to 1000 living at each Age-Group.							
Males	15·08	41·89	2·69	4·39	8·93	36·96	84·72
Females ..	12·25	29·59	1·89	3·58	7·88	21·37	71·70
Persons ..	13·62	35·81	2·29	3·98	8·39	28·40	77·18

The deaths of children under one year of age numbered 202, and were 109·5 per 1,000 of the births registered.

The number of deaths of infants under one from certain groups of diseases, and the proportion of them to 1,000 births are set forth below :—

Infants under One Year.	Total Deaths.	Deaths per 1,000 of Births.
1. Wasting Diseases ...	63	34·2
2. Convulsive Diseases ...	22	11·9
3. Diarrhœal Diseases ...	31	16·8
4. Pulmonary Diseases ...	35	18·9

1. Includes marasmus, atrophy, debility, asthenia, want of breast milk and premature birth.
2. Includes hydrocephalus, infantile meningitis, convulsions, and teething.
3. Includes diarrhœa, gastro-enteritis, intestinal catarrh, &c.
4. Includes bronchitis, pneumonia, and pleurisy.

In the following table are given the area in statute acres, the number of houses, the population and births during 1894 in the several parishes of the borough :—

Name of Localities.	Area in Statute Acres.	Houses, 1891.			Population.					Births Registered in 1894.
					1881.	1891.			Estimated to middle of 1894.	
		Inhabited.	Uninhabited.	Building.	Persons.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Persons.	
St. Mary.. ..	2,196	4,422	372	33	18,863	11,597	12,283	23,880	25,756	739
Workhouse ..										19
St. Lawrence ..	328	817	102	25	4,674	2,267	2,267	4,534	4,484	91
St. Giles ..	3,354	6,226	420	93	25,580	15,451	16,189	31,640	33,869	995
Totals ..	5,878	11,465	894	151	49,117	29,315	30,739	60,054	64,109	1,844

On the 1st February, 1885, the registration sub-districts of St. Lawrence and St. Giles were united under the name of St. Giles, so there are now only the two sub-districts of St. Mary and St. Giles.

In the accompanying table, prescribed by the Local Government Board, the deaths, classified according to ages, diseases, and localities, are enumerated :—

Table of Deaths during the Year 1894 in the Urban Sanitary District of Reading.

Names of Localities adopted for the purpose of these Statistics: public institutions being shown as separate localities.		Mortality from all causes, at subjoined Ages.							Mortality from subjoined causes, distinguishing Deaths of Children under Five Years of Age.																					Total.
														Fevers.																	
		At all ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.	Aged under 5 or over 5.	Small-pox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Typhus.	Enteric or Typhoid.	Continued.	Relapsing.	Puerperal.	Cholera.	Erysipelas.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhœa and Dysentery.	Rheumatic Fever.	Ague.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy.	Heart Disease.	Injuries.	All other Diseases.	
St. Mary Registration Sub-district.	St. Mary	292	86	45	8	7	83	63	Under 5.	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7	10	7	..	..	..	29	1	4	71	131
									5 upwards.	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	21	22	23	2	90	161
	Workhouse	44	0	0	1	0	18	25	Under 5.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0
									5 upwards.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	14	1	3	..	25	44
	Helena Nursing Home ..	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	Under 5.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0
									5 upwards.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	2
St. Giles Registration Sub-district.	St. Lawrence	49	8	3	3	6	19	10	Under 5.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	8	11
									5 upwards.	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	6	3	5	5	16	38
	H.M. Prison	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	Under 5.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0
									5 upwards.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	3
	St. Giles	422	107	41	16	23	132	103	Under 5.	..	2	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8	4	8	..	..	..	27	..	3	93	148
									5 upwards.	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	41	43	39	2	145	274
	Royal Berkshire Hospital	101	4	7	10	15	57	8	Under 5.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	9	11
									5 upwards.	..	..	2	..	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	3	5	9	15	49	90
	Isolation Hospitals ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Under 5.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0
									5 upwards.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0
Totals		913	205	96	38	51	313	210	Under 5.	..	3	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15	15	15	..	..	..	58	1	9	181	301
									5 upwards.	..	1	2	..	..	6	..	..	3	..	1	..	..	2	5	..	85	74	79	24	330	612
Deaths occurring outside the district among persons belonging thereto		9	0	0	1	1	3	4	Under 5.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0
									5 upwards.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	9	9
Deaths occurring within the district among persons not belonging thereto		49	3	2	5	4	31	4	Under 5.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	4	5
									5 upwards.	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	4	5	7	24	44
Deaths due to the district		873	202	94	34	48	285	210	Under 5.	..	3	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15	15	15	..	..	..	58	1	8	177	296
									5 upwards.	..	1	1	..	..	5	..	..	3	..	1	..	..	2	4	..	84	70	74	17	315	577

The corrected deaths included 4 from scarlet fever, 4 from diphtheria, 1 from membranous croup, 5 from enteric or typhoid fever, 15 from measles, 15 from whooping cough, and 17 from diarrhœa; so 61 deaths were due to the principal zymotic diseases. This was at the rate of 0·95 per 1,000 of the population, and was 0·81 below the preceding ten years' average of 1·76.

The next table, relating to 1894 and the twenty years preceding, enumerates the

Deaths from the Principal Zymotic Diseases.

Year.	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894
Small Pox	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Measles	28	0	10	9	2	33	12	2	49	22	7	58	1	52	8	7	18	29	36	32	15
Scarlet Fever	2	2	36	64	18	9	31	3	10	2	3	19	8	9	5	3	0	2	22	1	4
Diphtheria	4	0	2	2	1	3	3	1	6	16	9	9	5	3	4	6	6	5	12	7	5
Whooping Cough ..	11	26	10	7	62	13	28	4	30	30	8	22	19	11	5	30	14	21	13	8	15
Fevers of a continued character. Typhus	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Fevers of a continued character. Enteric	7	12	11	9	24	8	7	9	7	9	7	6	6	11	7	2	8	4	8	7	5
Fevers of a continued character. Doubtful	5	7	1	6	0	5	2	2	0	0	3	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Diarrhœa and Dysentery	22	36	18	18	33	13	60	13	27	16	25	11	31	44	28	27	46	28	40	39	17
Total Deaths from the above principal Zymotic Diseases	80	84	88	115	141	84	144	35	129	95	63	126	71	132	57	75	92	89	131	102	61
Death rate per 1,000	2·2	2·3	2·4	3·0	3·6	2·1	3·5	0·8	3·0	2·2	1·4	2·8	1·5	2·8	1·0	1·3	1·6	1·5	2·1	1·6	0·95

The next table records the mortality from consumption, pulmonary diseases, heart diseases, and cancerous diseases, for several years past :—

Death Rate per 1,000 Persons Living.

DISEASE.	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	10 years' average 1884 to 1893.	1894
Phthisis ..	2·3	2·2	2·2	2·0	2·1	2·3	1·6	1·6	2·0	1·6	1·8	1·5	1·5	1·48	1·38	1·23	1·84	1·51	1·27	1·23	1·47	1·31
Bronchitis .. Pneumonia .. Pleurisy ..	3·0	2·7	2·8	2·5	3·1	3·3	3·7	2·3	3·0	2·6	3·2	4·5	3·5	2·89	3·10	2·69	2 59	3·05	3·12	2·16	3·08	1·99
Diseases of the Heart	1·4	1·4	1·5	1·4	1·7	1·4	1·6	1·4	1·2	1·2	1·1	1·3	1·1	1·2	0·95	0·85	1·35	1·42	0·96	1·08	1·13	1·17
Cancer ..													0·90	0·56	0·63	0·83	0·78	0·65	0·68	0·54	*0·69	0·81

* Average of eight years only.

In the subjoined table the deaths due to cancerous diseases in the borough, during the year, are classified according to age, sex, and locality :—

	Age	25-35		35-45		45-55		55-65		65-75		75-95		Totals.	
	Sex	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
1894	St. Mary ...	0	1	1	1	2	5	2	3	1	3	1	4	7	17
	St. Lawrence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	St. Giles ...	1	0	0	4	6	7	2	3	0	0	1	2	10	16
	Total ..	1	1	1	5	8	12	4	6	1	5	2	6	17	35

The death rate from consumption was 1·31 per 1,000 of the inhabitants, being 0·16 per 1,000 below the ten years' average of 1·47.

Pulmonary diseases, other than phthisis, proved fatal to 1·99 out of every 1,000 of the population, a mortality which was 1·09 below 3·08, the average of the ten years preceding.

Diseases of the heart caused the death of 1·17 per 1,000, which was very slightly above the average of 1·13.

Cancerous diseases were the cause of 0·81 death per 1,000; this was 0·12 above the eight years' average of 0·69.

The annexed table sets forth the statistics for the twenty-one years since 1874, inclusive.

Year.	Estimated Population to 30th June.	Registered Births.	DEATHS.								Birth rate per 1,000 living.	Death rate per 1,000 living.	Zymotic death rate per 1,000 living.	§Deaths of Children under 1 year per 1,000 Births.	Houses connected with the Sewers.
			All registered in Boro'.	In Hospital.	In Workhouse.	Due to other Districts.	†Due to Boro'.	§Under 1 year.	§Under 5 years.	§Over 5 years.					
1894	64,109	1,844	913	101	44	49	873	202	296	578	28·8	13·6	0·95	110	12,619
1893	62,833	1,853	972	115	62	47	933	222	346	587	29·5	14 8	1·6	120	12,416
1892	61,582	1,838	1,142	108	68	43	1,107	260	401	706	29·8	17·98	2·1	141	12,140
1891	60,357	1,956	1,094	98	69	47	1,056	274	388	668	32·4	17·5	1·5	140	11,855
1890	59,124	1,700	947	94	60	50	900	224	318	582	28·8	15·2	1·6	132	11,468
1889	57,906	1,885	853	63	63	33	†825	217	351	474	32·6	14·2	1·3	115	10,907
1888	*56,713	1,838	873	74	58	32	841	220	316	525	32·4	14·8	1·0	120	9,990
1887	47,377	1,585	865	77	57	39	826	186	328	537	33·5	17·4	2·8	115	9,138
1886	46,496	1,567	845	69	54	30	815	216	317	528	33·7	17·5	1·5	138	8,765
1885	45,631	1,521	882	74	52	32	850	204	369	513	33·3	18·6	2·8	134	8,395
1884	44,782	1,536	824	79	67	34	790	191	277	547	34·3	17·6	1·4	124	8,226
1883	43,950	1,515	746	58	50	39	707	164	283	463	34·5	16·1	2·2	108	7,982
1882	43,132	1,494	806	58	46	31	775	201	372	434	34·6	17·9	3·0	134	7,654
1881	42,332	1,500	635	58	59	36	599	151	218	417	35·4	14·2	0·8	101	7,176
1880	41,232	1,573	852	57	51	37	815	264	408	444	38·2	19·8	3·5	168	6,712
1879	40,161	1,443	799	53	66	28	771	182	281	518	35·9	19·2	2·1	126	5,975
1878	39,118	1,455	889	78	79	41	848	246	367	522	37·2	21·7	3·6	169	5,238
1877	38,102	1,434	674	40	54	25	649	179	290	384	37·6	17·0	3·0	125	3,860
1876	37,113	1,370	703	61	43	34	669	185	270	433	36·9	18·0	2·4	135	2,003
1875	36,149	1,350	698	50	57	38	660	165	251	447	37·3	18·3	2·3	122	None till Nov.
1874	35,210	1,320	700	58	40	39	661	169	263	437	37·5	18·8	2·3	128	None.

* Extended Borough.

† Since 1889 an addition has been made of any deaths in Moulsford Lunatic Asylum of persons who had been admitted from any part now comprised in the borough.

§ The corrected numbers have been given from 1887.

Infectious Diseases.

Notification of Infectious Diseases has now been in force in your district for thirteen years.

The accompanying table gives the total and average annual notifications and deaths, and the cost of notification for the ten years 1882 to 1891, and also similar particulars for 1892, 1893, and 1894.

Disease.	Totals for 10 Years. 1882 to 1891.		10 Years' average. 1882 to 1891.		1892.		1893.		1894.	
	Reptd.	Died.	Reptd.	Died.	Reptd.	Died.	Reptd.	Died.	Reptd.	Died.
Small Pox	18	1	1·8	0·1	0	0	25	0	1	0
Scarlet Fever	1648	62	164·8	6·2	413	22	214	1	202	4
Diphtheria and doubtful cases of Croup..	231	69	23·1	6·9	39	12	18	7	[5]21	[5]6
Measles	7281	251	728·1	25·1	1055	36	470	32	1017	15
Enteric and doubtful cases of Fever ..	213	76	21·3	7·6	[1]17	9	[2]23	[3]10	[5]17	[5]6
Typhus Fever..	0	0	0	0	0	0	[4]16	6	0	0
Puerperal Fever	45	29	4·5	2·9	7	5	9	6	5	3
Diarrhœa (over one year)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	416	17
Totals	9436	488	943·6	48·8	1531	84	775	62	1679	51
Amount of fees paid to medical practitioners for certificates given in conformity with the Act	£411 14 0		£41 3 5		£73 2 0		£36 17 0		£78 19 0	

1 Two of these which were treated in the Royal Berkshire Hospital were admitted from other districts.

2 One of these was a case of typhus fever.

3 Three of these which occurred in the Royal Berkshire Hospital did not belong to the district.

4 There were two other cases of typhus fever.

5 One of these which occurred in the Royal Berkshire Hospital did not belong to the district.

On July 31st I recommended that, in view of the prevalence of cholera on the continent of Europe, and of the possibility of its being introduced into this country, and of the fact that an adult had recently died from a very acute attack of diarrhœa in the borough, diarrhœa occurring in persons over one year of age should be deemed to be an infectious disease within and subject to the provisions of the Reading Corporation Act, 1881, until the 31st day of October following, and that the necessary steps for declaring it to be so should be taken.

The Council made an order to that effect on August 2nd, which was sanctioned by the Local Government Board, on August 9th, and was duly published on August 11th.

At a meeting of the Sanitary Committee on November 10th it was reported that the Council on October 31st referred to them for consideration and report the subject as to whether steps should be taken by the Council for declaring phthisis to be an

infectious disease within and subject to the provisions of the Reading Corporation Act, 1881; that is to say whether phthisis should be included amongst the infectious diseases which have to be notified to the medical officer of health by medical men attending such cases and by householders or other persons having charge of them.

It was resolved that the matter be referred to me to make such report to the Committee thereon as I might deem expedient.

That consumption is caused by the infection of the system with a micro-organism, the bacillus tuberculosis, can no longer be doubted; but to say that it is infectious in the same sense as small pox, scarlet fever, or other diseases of that class are, is to overstate the case. Its virus is expelled from diseased lungs in the expectoration which consumptive persons cough up. Where this is deposited it dries up, and becoming pulverized, is mingled as dust with the air, and may then infect healthy persons, or more especially those having delicate lungs or any hereditary tendency to the disease, particularly if they reside in dirty, dark, ill-ventilated, or badly-drained habitations with unhealthy surroundings.

Dr. Arthur Ransome and Professor Delépine, of Owens College, Manchester, have shown by direct experiment that both pure cultivations of the microbe and dried sputum from consumptive persons retain their infective power for long periods of time when kept in darkness with very slight access of air, but that "on the other hand, all the specimens exposed to both light and air, even for two days only, and for one hour of sunshine, were found to have entirely lost their power for evil."

If, therefore, all persons would freely avail themselves of nature's costless disinfectants, fresh air and sunlight, would avoid overcrowding, would keep their houses scrupulously clean, and see that their surroundings were healthy and free from any accumulation of putrefactive matters, and would boil all cow's milk before it is drunk, they would go a long way towards keeping consumption away from their doors, or preventing its spread if it gained admittance.

That such a result is attainable when proper care in these directions is exercised is shown by the statement of Dr. Ransome that after fifteen years at the Manchester Hospital for Consumption he found that in several instances patients in whom the disease had become quiescent during their stay in hospital remained as domestic servants for longer or shorter periods, in one or two cases for over a year, and yet no re-infection took place; and that during the period mentioned no case of phthisis appeared in any of the continually changing official population of the hospital.

The enormous diminution in the mortality from consumption which has taken place in recent years, amounting to a saving of some 30,000 lives in England and Wales every year, has been brought about by the extensive works undertaken for the improvement of the public health by numerous sanitary authorities throughout the country.

It would be quite out of the question to separate consumptive persons from their families and confine them in isolation hospitals for months or even some years, as may reasonably be done in the case of infectious diseases lasting but a few weeks.

We must trust largely to education of the public in these subjects for the further prevention of consumption, and with that end in view it might be of advantage for you to issue leaflets giving plain advice on the measures to prevent the disease; but probably as much might be done in that direction without as with notification, because such leaflets might be distributed to all the medical men in the borough with a request that they would give one to each of their consumptive patients.

Then again, it would be advantageous to disinfect rooms and bedding after deaths from consumption, but notification would not help us in that respect, because I already receive prompt information of all deaths from that complaint.

I believe, moreover, that notification of phthisis would be so unpopular with the whole of the public, and with a majority of the medical profession, that it would be most imperfectly given; whilst, if we had it, I doubt whether our power to check the disease would be materially enhanced.

For these several reasons I feel constrained to say that I cannot advise you to make notification of phthisis compulsory in this borough.

The cases of infectious diseases which came to my knowledge during the year are classified below.

Locality.		Aged under 5 or over 5.	Small Pox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	*Membranous Croup.	FEVERS. Typhus.	FEVERS. Enteric or Typhoid.	FEVERS. *Continued	FEVERS. Relapsing.	FEVERS. Puerperal.	Cholera.	*Erysipelas.	†Measles.	†Diarrhœa (over 1 year).
St. Mary Registration Sub-district.	St. Mary	Under 5.	..	13	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	422	179
		5 upwards.	1	86	3	..	..	2	..	..	4	..	..		
	Workhouse	Under 5.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
		5 upwards.	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
St. Giles Registration Sub-district.	St. Lawrence	Under 5.	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	37	24
		5 upwards	..	8	..	..	..	2	..	..	1	..	..		
	(H) St. Giles	Under 5.	..	20	2	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	558	213
		5 upwards.	..	66	9	..	..	7	..	..	2	..	..		
	Royal Berkshire Hospital	Under 5.	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
		5 upwards.	..	4	2	..	..	5	..	..	..	..	..		
	Totals	Under 5.	..	37	7	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1017	416
		5 upwards.	1	165	14	..	..	16	..	..	7	..	..		

(H) Signifies that the Isolation Hospitals are situated in this parish.

* Membranous croup, continued fever and erysipelas are not required to be notified by the Reading Corporation Act, 1881.

† The age of all persons ill with measles and diarrhœa has not been recorded.

The number of these cases removed from their homes for treatment in the Isolation Hospital is recorded in the next table.

Locality.	Aged under 5 or over 5.	Small Pox.	Scarla-tina.
St. Mary..	Under 5.	..	1
	5 upwards.	1	4
St. Lawrence	Under 5.	..	..
	5 upwards.	..	4
St. Giles..	Under 5.	..	..
	5 upwards.	..	1
Totals	Under 5.	..	1
	5 upwards.	1	9

Small Pox was introduced into the borough but once during the year. On May 31st I admitted a man into the small pox hospital, where he remained until July 8th.

He had been staying with a sister in Birmingham who was then suffering from an attack of small pox of so modified a form that it was stated she was not aware of the nature of her complaint.

I subsequently heard from the medical officer of health of Birmingham that that and another house in the same court were afterwards found to have been a regular nest of small pox.

The man's illness did not commence until a few days after his arrival in Reading, and he, too, had very modified small pox, owing to his having been well vaccinated in infancy. He had never been re-vaccinated, and this afforded a fresh illustration of the well established fact that although vaccination in infancy, when properly performed, will in nearly all instances so modify the disease when taken as to make it a thing of small importance, it will frequently not protect the individual against the infection throughout a whole lifetime. Hence it is most essential that every person should be re-vaccinated successfully at least once after childhood.

I asked the public vaccinator to re-vaccinate all the persons in the house requiring it who would consent; he re-vaccinated the man's wife, but another woman refused, as she said she had been re-vaccinated some time ago.

Here was an instance of the oft-told tale that small pox is readily amenable to control by prompt isolation of the sick, and early re-vaccination of the healthy.

Scarlet Fever, as in the preceding year, was somewhat prevalent. The total number of cases was 202, and they were distributed pretty evenly over the whole year, the numbers in each quarter having been 42, 59, 44 and 57, respectively. Thirty-seven of the patients were under five years of age, and 165 were aged five and upwards. Four of them died, three under five, and one over five years of age. The disease was for the most part of a mild character, as, indeed, it has been for several years past. Nine cases were treated in the scarlet fever hospital, and one in Rose Kiln Cottage.

Compensation was paid to eight persons who were requested to discontinue their employment during the time their houses remained infected from patients being treated in them.

Diphtheria attacked seven children under five, and 14 persons over five years of age. Three of the cases under five and two over five died, but one girl, aged 12, who died in the Royal Berkshire Hospital, belonged to another district. Eight cases happened in the first quarter of the year, five in the second, five in the third, and three in the fourth. One child under five years of age died from membranous croup.

Measles was almost absent in the first quarter of the year, when 14 cases were reported; it slightly increased in the second quarter, during which I received notification of 40 cases; that number increased to 227 in the third quarter, whilst in the fourth quarter it became epidemic and 736 cases were notified, making a total of 1017 during the year. Fifteen of them, all under five years of age, ended fatally.

From October 9th to the end of the year six infants' departments of public elementary schools, and four boys' and girls' elementary schools had to be closed on account of the general prevalence of this disease, and I gave the requisite certificates to the school authorities.

Enteric, or Typhoid Fever was notified in 17 instances, six of the cases happened in the first, five in the second, four in the third, and two in the fourth quarter of the year. All but one were over five years of age. Five of them were treated in the Royal Berkshire Hospital, but one of those had been admitted from another district. Six of them, all over five years of age, ended fatally, but only five of the deaths were due to the borough.

Puerperal Fever attacked seven women, three of whom succumbed to that disease. Compensation was paid to two nurses who had attended cases, and were requested not to nurse other women for short periods.

Whooping Cough caused the deaths of 15 children under five years of age, which was just the average annual number since the extension of the borough, without making any correction for the increase of population.

Diarrhœa, occurring in persons over one year of age, was made notifiable from August 11th to October 31st by an order of the Council, as has already been explained. During that time I received notification of 416 cases, 136 in August, 164 in September, and 116 in October. During the whole year there were 15 deaths from this disease under five and two over five years of age. This number was considerably less than the average of recent years, the diminution having been due to the cold wet summer, such seasons being always favourable to infant life, since they prevent the great prevalence of diarrhœal diseases amongst children which so often happens in seasons of an opposite character.

This country was threatened by a real danger of an invasion of cholera from the continent of Europe, and the temporary notification of diarrhœa put us in a favourable position to resist its spread if it should have happened to be brought into this district. It told us where there was any undue prevalence of diarrhœa, and that alone was a great safeguard, because the conditions which foster that complaint are potent to cause the more serious disease to take a hold and increase when once introduced; and by drawing our attention to any such suspicious localities we were able to have them cleansed, and if necessary disinfected, by men in your employ.

A woman died in July from a very acute attack of choleraic diarrhœa, but true cholera did not appear.

Influenza was not epidemic, but 24 deaths were ascribed to it, five of which occurred under five years of age and 19 over five.

The usual routine measures to prevent the spread of infectious disease were followed.

Four public elementary schools and six infants' departments of elementary schools were closed in the fourth quarter of the year on account of the prevalence of measles.

Compensation was paid to ten persons who were required to discontinue following their employment on account of their having been brought in contact with cases of infectious disease.

Disinfection.—The things disinfected in Mr. Street's apparatus were:—

Mattresses and palliasses	124	
Beds	22	
Bolsters and pillows	162	
Carpet	177	square yards
Rugs	7	
Curtains	10	
Articles of furniture	3	
Books	71	
Sundry articles	1558	
Total	2134	

Mr. Roberton, the inspector of nuisances, disinfected 245 rooms in infected houses, and the isolation hospitals several times.

Isolation Hospital Accommodation.—In consequence of the combustible nature of the huts used for small pox patients I considered there were not sufficient safeguards against fire, so recommended that four more fire buckets should be provided, and that a hand fire pump should be kept on the premises for use in any part of the isolation hospitals in case of need. That and six additional buckets were procured.

On May 31st one patient was admitted into the small pox hospital, in which he remained till July 8th.

Nine patients were isolated in the scarlet fever hospital, which was occupied by them for 278 days, and one woman who was ill with scarlet fever was treated in the cottage at Rose Kiln from October 21st to November 25th.

Mrs. Titcomb, who had previously been employed as nurse in the hospitals, was engaged to reside permanently in the scarlet fever hospital from July 14th.

At the meeting of the Council on October 4th a letter from the Local Government Board was read, expressing a hope to find in this report that progress had been made towards providing suitable permanent accommodation for the isolation of infectious disease occurring within the borough; when it was resolved—"That the letter from the Local Government Board now read, and the subject therein referred to, be referred to the Sanitary Committee for consideration and report."

On October 8th this letter was submitted to the Sanitary Committee, whereupon it was resolved—"That having regard to the following resolution adopted by the Council in August, 1893, viz.:—'That the Committee do recommend to the Council that having regard to the difficulty of obtaining a suitable site for a hospital except at great cost, and to the great cost which would be incurred by the erection of a permanent hospital, and to the fact that there is now in the borough much more accommodation for isolating cases of infectious disease than has previously existed, no further steps be taken at present for providing a new permanent hospital,' and no new circumstances having arisen, the Committee do not now deem it necessary to make any recommendation to the Council on the subject referred to in the letter from the Local Government Board."

At a meeting of the Council on November 9th, a proposal was made that the question of providing an infectious hospital should be referred to a Committee, who should be instructed to select a site and prepare a scheme for the approval of the Council, but was not adopted.

A similar resolution was proposed, but was not adopted, at the meeting of the Council on December 6th, when the following resolution was passed:—"That the subject mentioned in the motion be referred to the Sanitary Committee for consideration and report."

On December 17th the Sanitary Committee resolved:—"That the Committee do recommend to the Council that the Basingstoke Road site previously proposed for the erection of a hospital for infectious diseases be appropriated so as to be in hand for use whenever required for isolation purposes in connection with infectious diseases."

On January 3rd, 1895, the Council resolved:—"That the recommendation of the Sanitary Committee as to the appropriation of a site in the Basingstoke Road to be used for isolation purposes in connection with infectious diseases be not adopted."

On January 7th the Sanitary Committee resolved:—"That a Sub-committee consisting of the Chairman of the Committee, and Alderman Messer and Councillors Martin, Wellman, and Willan be appointed to endeavour to select suitable sites for a hospital for infectious diseases and to report to the Committee thereon and generally as to the nature of the buildings which they would recommend for erection on any site they may select."

That Sub-committee reported to the Sanitary Committee on January 21st as follows:—

"The Sub-committee report that on the 9th January instant they met, all the members being present, and proceeded to inspect three sites which were suggested as suitable for a Hospital for Infectious Diseases, and which have not hitherto been submitted to the Committee or the Council for consideration. On their inspection the Sub-committee were accompanied, on their invitation, by Mr. Councillor Walters.

"The sites referred to are as follows, namely:—

(1) Land in the parish of Sonning near to the Great Western Railway and forming part of the Holme Park Estate.

(2) The reservoir and land on the western side of Whitley Street, which forms part of the property belonging to the Waterworks Undertaking, and is generally known as the Whitley Tank.

(3) The Coley Recreation Ground.

"After inspecting these sites and considering the whole matter the Sub-committee came to the conclusion that site No. 1 is unsuitable, it being so far from the town, and situate in the district of another local authority, and that site No. 2 is of insufficient area.

"The Sub-committee were of opinion, however, that site No. 3 (the Coley Recreation Ground) is the most suitable of all the sites which have yet been considered, and the Sub-committee therefore recommend the Committee and the Council to determine that a portion of that ground, namely about 2½ acres on the eastern side thereof, be appropriated as the site for a hospital.

"The land is now held by the Sanitary Authority under lease from Mr. John Bligh Monck for a term of 21 years computed from the 29th September, 1888,

at a yearly rent of £127 8s. 8d., with the option to the Sanitary Authority of purchasing the fee simple at any time during the term for £3823 2s. 6d., upon giving 6 months' previous notice in writing, the land, if purchased under such option, to be held by the Sanitary Authority for the purposes of the Public Health Act, 1875, and any Act amending the same, and to be disposed of and dealt with as the Sanitary Authority in the exercise of the provisions in such behalf contained in such Acts respectively shall think fit.

"The total acreage of the land included in the lease is 12 acres, 2 roods, and 39 poles, and if the proposals of the Sub-committee be adopted there will still remain amply sufficient land for purposes of public walks and recreation grounds. The Sub-committee, therefore, recommend that with this object all requisite steps be taken for acquiring from Mr. Monck the land comprised in the lease under the right of pre-emption before referred to.

"The Sub-committee having come to the foregoing conclusion requested the borough surveyor and the medical officer of health to prepare sketch plans shewing the nature of the buildings which they would recommend for erection on the proposed site. The accompanying plan has accordingly been prepared, together with a report on the subject by the borough engineer, of which report the following is a copy :—

"Reading, 21st January, 1895.

"'To the Hospital Sub-committee.

"'Gentlemen,

"'In accordance with your request I submit a Block Plan shewing a suggested arrangement for an Infectious Hospital of 20 beds on a site at the Coley Recreation Ground. By means of such a hospital three different infectious diseases may be treated simultaneously for patients of different sexes.

"'The arrangement consists of :—

"'1. Scarlet Fever Pavilion for 12 beds.

"'2. An isolation Ward Block for 8 beds.

"'3. Administrative Block.

"'4. Laundry, Mortuary, and Ambulance Block.

"'Ample cubical and superficial space per patient has been provided so as fully to satisfy the requirements of the Local Government Board.

"'The isolation Ward Block contains 4 single-bedded Ward Rooms, which can, if required, be used for private paying patients; or for observation cases, if found necessary.

"'The whole is arranged in such a way that extension of the blocks may be conveniently carried out.

"'After allowing a space of 40 feet between a double fence around the whole of the hospital, to establish a neutral zone, I find that 2½ acres of land would be amply sufficient for present purposes.

"'I estimate the cost of the buildings, fences, &c., at £5,200 approximately, including the extension of surface-water and sewage sewer, and laying out the ground in a simple manner. Covered ways are not provided for between the blocks.

"'Nothing has been added for the extension of the gas and water mains to the site; as it is assumed that the respective authorities would extend their mains for the purpose of such an institution.

"'The approximate estimate is made up as follows :—

"'Scarlet Fever Hospital	£1600
"'Isolation Block	1685
"'Administrative Block	1000
"'Mortuary, &c.	250
"'Double Fence, making up Ground, Drainage (Sewage and Surface), Water	330
"'Add for Sundries	335
	£5200

"'I have caused test holes to be dug into the site and find that the filled in material is unobjectionable.

"'Where, however, the buildings are proposed to be erected it is virgin soil.

"'I am, Gentlemen, your obedient Servant,

"'JOHN BOWEN.'

"The Sub-committee having examined the plan and the report and approximate estimates of the borough surveyor further recommend that buildings of the nature shewn upon the plan and referred to in the report of the borough surveyor be erected upon the site recommended in this report.

"The Sub-committee also recommend that the Town Clerk be instructed to take all requisite steps for obtaining the sanction of the Local Government Board to a loan of amount sufficient to provide for the purchase of the land, and the erection of the proposed hospital buildings.

"(Signed) GEORGE PHILBRICK, Chairman.

"Reading, 21st January, 1895."

The Committee then resolved :—"That the proposals and recommendations contained in the report of the Sub-committee be approved, and that the Committee do recommend that the Council do approve and adopt the same."

On February 4th, the Sub-committee reported further, as follows :—

"The Sub-committee submit reports which they have obtained from the borough engineer and surveyor and the medical officer of health, containing particulars of the cost of providing covered ways between the various blocks of buildings forming the proposed hospital for infectious diseases, shewn on the plans submitted at the last meeting of the committee, and also of the probable annual cost of administration if the hospital should be established.

"'Reading, 1st February, 1895.

"'To the Hospital Sub-committee.

"'Gentlemen,

"'Infectious Diseases Hospital.

"'I have prepared an estimate of the cost of wood and corrugated iron covered ways from the Administrative Block to the Scarlet Fever Pavilion and to the Isolation Block on the proposed site at the Coley Recreation Ground.

"'The covered way is divided into two walks by a wooden wind-guard 6 feet 6 inches in height, affording shelter for passing attendants.

"'I estimate the cost at £336.

"'Your obedient Servant,

"'JOHN BOWEN, Borough Engineer.

"'Town Hall, Reading, February 1st, 1895.

"'To the Hospital Sub-committee,

"'Gentlemen,

"'At your request, I now report on the probable cost of maintenance of such an isolation hospital containing 20 beds as is described in the borough surveyor's report, dated January 21st.

"'For the purpose of obtaining the most exact information I could, I have again visited the Heathcote Hospital at Leamington, which is constructed for 22 beds, and was favoured with full details of the cost of administration of that hospital by Mr. Alderman Wackrill, the Chairman of the Warwick Joint Hospital Board.

"'Judging from those facts, the nearest approximate estimate I can give of the annual cost of administration and maintenance of nurses and patients in your proposed hospital is about £125 if no patients were in it, and £850 if all the 20 beds were occupied continuously throughout the whole year.

"'Against those charges there would be a saving of £20 16s. 0d. a year, the wages now paid to the nurse at the Scarlet Fever Hospital, and about £35 a year for compensation paid to sundry persons for being prohibited from following their employment when infectious diseases are most prevalent; so the nett cost above what is now paid would be about £105 with the hospital empty, and about £800 when it is fully occupied the whole year.

"'A penny district rate is estimated to produce £1040.

"'I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

"'ALFRED ASHBY.'

"(Signed) GEORGE PHILBRICK,

"Reading, 4th February, 1895." "Chairman.

The following resolution was then passed by the Sanitary Committee:—"That the Committee do recommend to the Council that covered ways as described in the surveyor's report be provided at the estimated cost of £336, making, with the approximate estimate of the cost of erecting the hospital buildings a total estimated approximate cost for buildings of £5536, the cost of the requisite furniture being estimated at about £300 additional."

On February 7th, however, the Council resolved:—"That the recommendations of the Sanitary Committee for the provision of infectious hospitals be not approved, and that the whole subject be referred back to the Sanitary Committee for further consideration and report."

It has for some time past been acknowledged that small pox patients ought not to be put upon the same site as persons suffering from other infectious diseases.

As there appears to be some misapprehension on this point it is necessary that it should be clearly understood that no small pox patients would ever have been taken to the proposed hospital.

The site selected by the Sanitary Committee was most convenient, and was admirably adapted for the purpose to which it was proposed to adapt it, namely:—for the erection of a hospital for the isolation of cases of infectious diseases other than small pox.

The Commission to inquire respecting Small Pox and Fever Hospitals in the Metropolis, of 1881, stated in their report when speaking of hospitals for fevers other than small pox, that:—"It is therefore extremely fortunate that all evidence goes to show that well-conducted fever hospitals involve no appreciable risk to the neighbourhood. This is the testimony as well of the medical superintendents of the Asylums and other Fever Hospitals as of the officers of health who are in charge of the districts in which these hospitals exist. Nor have we received any statements of an opposite tendency."

To give one illustration alone I may quote the facts given by Dr. Thorne Thorne C.B., from the Report on the Influence of the London Fever Hospital by Mr. Shirley F. Murphy, now medical officer of health of the London County Council, in which he says:—"A not inconsiderable population in Islington has for many years past "resided in houses at a distance varying from 36 feet to 71 feet of the London Fever "Hospital buildings, from 49 feet to 80 feet of the wards themselves, and from 22 feet "to 33 feet of the hospital gardens used by the patients; the gardens belonging "respectively to the houses and to the hospital, being only separated by a boundary "wall.

"For a term of several years there were under treatment at one and the same time "in the hospital wards from 100 to 200 typhus patients, along with a score or two of "scarlet fever and enteric fever patients; during several months of this period, and by "the aid of special temporary provision, accommodation was found for the simul-"taneous isolation of from 200 to 300 relapsing fever patients; and during a later "period, the hospital being used for little but scarlet fever and enteric fever, it has "contained at one and the same time from 80 to 100 scarlet fever, and some 30 to 40 "enteric fever patients.

"As regards the relation between the two things as measured by such inquiry as "it was practicable to make, the following appear:—Not a single case either of typhus "or relapsing fever could be heard of as having occurred amongst the population in "question. As regards scarlet fever and enteric fever, there had been certain cases in "the adjoining houses during the years covered by the inquiry. Making, however, "such estimate as he could respecting the number of such cases to be expected in this "population, according to the prevalence of scarlet fever and enteric fever about "London generally, Mr. Murphy judges that the observed number and estimated "number are practically identical."

Having regard to these and other well-known facts, there can be no doubt that a hospital for infectious diseases, other than small pox, erected on the site proposed by the Sanitary Committee would constitute no danger to the town, seeing that it was proposed to surround the site by a double fence 40 feet apart, and to keep all buildings and patients within the limits of the inner fence.

General.

The Town Water.—Mr. Walker, the waterworks manager, has kindly furnished me, as usual, with the particulars respecting the supply from the Reading Waterworks. He gives the following figures:—

Premises supplied with water from the waterworks mains within the borough	13,690
Ditto ditto outside the borough ...	485
Estimated population supplied within the borough	64,109
Ditto ditto outside ditto	3,000

Water consumed for all purposes		832,785,782 gals.
Ditto per head per day	for domestic purposes	16 gals.
	for trade and municipal purposes ...	18 ,,
	for all purposes	34 ,,
Rainfall at Forbury Gardens in 1894		26·57 in.
Ditto ditto in 1893		18·11 in.
Water used in sewer flushing		5,251,362 gals.
Water closets connected with the sewers and flushed by cisterns		14,642
Water closets hand flushed		14

A water main was laid to Lower Whitley, but a supply of water has not yet been taken to the houses at Whitley Wood.

The Sewers constructed during the year consisted of 650 yards of surface-water sewers, and 1,560 yards of sewage sewers.

The surveyor prepared a scheme for sewering Norfolk Street, Spring Gardens, but it was not deemed expedient to carry it out, and other arrangements for draining that part have since been made.

The House Connections made numbered 56, and drained 203 fresh houses into the sewers.

At the close of the year there were 12,619 houses drained by means of 3,892 separate junctions with the sewers.

The Plans for New Buildings approved numbered 242; they represented 239 new houses, 49 sheds, 15 stables and coach-houses, and 118 additions to houses. One hundred and five houses, nine sheds, one stable, and 21 additions to houses were completed.

New Streets.—The upper part of Cardigan Road and Cardigan Gardens, on the Foxhill House Estate, were completed. Linmouth Road, Linton Road, and Weymouth Road, off Vastern Road, were in course of construction.

I am indebted to the surveyor for information respecting these matters.

Old and Dilapidated Houses.—Eight very old houses in Minster Street were demolished, and the site of one of them was built upon.

The demolition of these houses has enabled what was formerly a very narrow part of that street to be widened.

In accordance with a resolution of the Highways and Lighting Committee, passed on January 5th, 1894, the surveyor and I examined the old courts and alleys existing in the borough.

In consequence of that examination six houses in Fir Court, Coley, which we found in an unhealthy condition owing to dampness arising from dilapidations, were repaired, and the end wall of one of them, which was in a dangerous condition, was rebuilt; Cheltenham Court, West Street, was repaved; and Cherry Court, Castle Street, was repaved at the public expense, as it is a public way to many houses in Castle Square. The water closets belonging to the houses in that Court were repaired and have since been kept in proper order by Corporation employés.

These repairs have effected marked improvements in the places referred to.

Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890.—Two houses at Whitley Wood Common, which I certified to be unfit for human habitation at the end of 1893, and which you then ordered to be made fit for habitation within three months, were closed and have not since been occupied.

The Slaughter-houses and Public Abattoirs were systematically inspected by the inspector, and he made quarterly reports upon their condition, which were duly considered by the Sanitary Committee. He found that the places were generally kept in a clean and proper state, and observed no serious infringements of the bye-laws regarding them, any slight matters requiring attention having been readily seen to when the occupiers were told of them.

In January application was made for a licence for the use and occupation as a slaughter-house of premises situated at 23 and 25, Rupert Street. I examined the place and found it was not a proper situation for a slaughter-house, so the application was not granted.

In December a licence was granted under the provisions of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890, for the use and occupation for a further period of twelve months of a place at the rear of the premises Nos. 58 and 60, Castle Street, as a slaughter-house for slaughtering swine, with a stipulation that all slaughtering should be done in a covered building, so as to avoid causing any annoyance to the inmates of the adjoining premises.

In consequence of a request from the Farm Committee to the Sanitary Committee to take measures for disposing of butchers' offal by chemical means, I reported that the best means of disposing of the offal would be to choose a site at Manor Farm where there was some good soil, and to have trenches made there in which it should be deposited and at once covered over with the excavated soil mixed with a little gas lime, where it should be allowed to remain undisturbed until it had become innocuous; whereupon it was resolved by the Sanitary Committee that the Council should be recommended that about an acre of land on the high ground of Manor Farm should be appropriated for the purpose; but the Council did not adopt the resolution.

My proposal was based upon the fact that the upper few feet of good soil teem with micro-organisms whose province it is to live upon dead animal matter, and convert it into harmless substances. If it had been adopted, allowing sufficient space so as not to overtax the capabilities of the soil and its living legions, the offal could have been disposed of inoffensively, and probably profitably, for after lying buried for a certain time, during which plants of the cabbage tribe could be grown on the ground, it would be converted into a valuable manure which could be removed and put on to land without causing offence; whilst by the time the acre had become filled the part first appropriated would probably be ready for use again, and would then perform its office better than ever, since it would be richer in nitrifying organisms than it had been at first.

This, I considered, would be a better plan than placing butchers' offal in festering heaps which cause an unbearably sickening stench when they are disturbed and spread upon the land.

Unsound Meat, &c.—On January 27th I was asked by a fishmonger to examine five barrels of herrings at the Great Western Railway Station which had been consigned to him from Exmouth. I found they were unsound and unfit for the food of man, and they were destroyed after they had been condemned by a magistrate.

The Anthrax Order of 1892.—I received no notice of the existence of anthrax.

Dairies, Cow-sheds, and Milk-shops.—There was a total of 95 persons registered under the Order of 1885, of these 30 were cow-keepers, 5 were dairymen, and 60

were purveyors of milk. Ten fresh persons were entered on the register during the year, and six were taken off.

The inspector made 136 inspections of 30 cow-sheds and places where milk was retailed. No infringements of the provisions of the above-named Order were observed.

An old cow-shed which abutted on a highway and was not in good condition, was removed.

Offensive Trades.—Arrangements were made to remove the hide and skin brokers' business which had been established in the Cattle Market to a building erected on a portion of the Fair Ground, and thus all cause of complaint will soon cease.

Inspection of the district was constantly carried on ; all the courts and alleys were systematically visited by the inspector. The details of inspection are given in his report.

One hundred and twenty-six vans which came into the borough during the May and Michaelmas Fairs, and at other times, were inspected, and no cases of infectious disease were found in them.

Complaints were made respecting nuisances caused by smoke from the chimneys of two business premises in Castle Street. The owners raised them so as to prevent nuisance when I drew their attention to the matter.

Factories and Workshops.—The ventilation of a clothing factory was found to be deficient, but it was improved when the owner's attention was drawn to the defect. Three tailors' workshops were found to be in a dirty state, and were cleansed. In one of them there was defective ventilation, which the owner promised to rectify. A bake-house, which was rather dilapidated and dirty, was repaired and cleansed. Complaints about these places were received from the inspector of factories.

On December 11th, 1893, the Sanitary Committee appointed a Sub-committee to consider and report what measures (if any) were necessary for providing such means of escape in cases of fire for the persons employed in factories as are referred to in section 7 of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1891. That Sub-committee directed the superintendent of the fire brigade and the borough surveyor to report upon the matter. I believe the former visited most of the factories in the borough, and saw that the requirements of the above-named section were complied with in many instances ; but he left without making any report on the subject, so it is uncertain what has been done in that respect.

The Canal Boats on the register numbered 19, three having been taken off it during the year.

The inspector paid 107 visits to 38 boats. Infectious disease was not found to exist in any of them. He observed four infringements of the Regulations of the Local Government Board under the Canal Boats Acts, which are enumerated in his report, and they were attended to on his giving notice of them to the owners or masters of the boats.

The Sale of Food and Drugs Acts.—As public analyst, I received 47 samples for analysis, five of which proved to be adulterated.

Two samples, one of butter and one of milk, were received from private individuals. They were both genuine.

The other 45 samples were submitted to me by the inspector of nuisances. Of these 32 were milk, and 28 of them were passed as genuine, though four of them

were of poor quality. The other four were adulterated by the addition of water varying in quantity from not less than $6\frac{3}{4}$ to not less than $11\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. The remainder of the samples were butter; twelve of them were genuine, and one was adulterated, being a mixture of about three parts of margarine with one of butter.

The proceedings respecting the five adulterated samples are described in the inspector's report.

The Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act, 1893.—The question of appointing a district analyst under this Act was considered, and it was decided not to take action in that direction at present.

As *Gas Examiner* I made observations on the gas supplied by the Reading Gas Company and found that its illuminating power and quality more than satisfied the prescribed standards.

A Special Flood Committee was appointed and empowered to do all that was necessary for preventing or mitigating injurious effects and inconveniences arising from the flood in November.

Under their direction the manual fire engines were employed for pumping water out of places where it was confined in water-tight basements; provision was made for the immediate removal of any mud or other deposits from flooded houses which might be collected and placed outside the houses by the occupiers; means of access to the houses and of passage along the roads and footways in the flooded parts were provided; and suitable disinfectants were supplied to the occupiers of houses when they could be used with advantage.

Acting upon the instructions of the Committee I issued a notice to the inhabitants of flooded localities advising them as to the course they should pursue in order to counteract any possible injury to health which might be likely to arise from the flooding of their houses.

A public meeting was convened by the Mayor at which a subscription was initiated for the relief of sufferers from the flood, and more money than was actually required was readily given by inhabitants of the borough.

Altogether some 1,000 houses in the lower parts of the town were inundated; but with the exception of some colds and other minor ailments, I failed to observe any ill effects on the public health which could be ascribed to the flood.

I append the report of the inspector of nuisances, which gives a detailed account of his work during the year.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

ALFRED ASHBY.

Report of the Inspector of Nuisances for the Year 1894

appended to the Report of the Medical Officer of Health.

Number of complaints received by the inspector of nuisances	86
Number of inspections of private premises	905
,, notices served	452
,, formal notices served by the Town Clerk	2
,, nuisances abated	548
,, cesspools emptied	27
,, blocked up sewer drains cleared	156
,, ,, surface ,, ,, ...	32
,, ,, water closets ,, ...	169
Accumulations of manure, &c., removed	43
Old drains opened and cleared	4
Smoke nuisances abated	7
Defective house drainage made good	14
Blocked urinals cleared	11
Soakages into houses prevented	13
Deposits of night soil covered up	2
Overcrowding abated...	7
Damp houses inspected	26
Animals improperly kept removed	37
Yards and house drains disinfected and cleansed after diarrhœa	112

I superintended the disinfection of 112 house drains and yards where diarrhœa prevailed or had recently prevailed during the three months of notification of that disease.

I made a weekly inspection of all courts and alleys in the borough.

I inspected 126 vans during the May and Michaelmas Fairs and at other times.

I visited 357 houses where infectious disease existed, and supplied disinfectants.

I made a thorough examination of the attendant circumstances, and of the house drainage in all cases of infectious disease, other than measles.

I disinfected rooms in 245 houses in which infectious disease had occurred.

I attended to the removal of 11 patients to the Isolation Hospitals. The Scarlet Fever Hospital was opened nearly the whole year, during which time I ordered all food, &c., for the occupants.

I saw all the rules carried out when the patients were discharged.

I visited all public and private slaughter-houses at intervals, and made quarterly reports on their condition.

I regularly visited the markets for the purpose of observing the quality of the meat and other provisions offered for sale.

As Inspector of Canal Boats, I made 107 inspections of 38 boats, and found 4 infringements of the Canal Boats Acts, and the regulations of the Local Government Board, namely:—1 boat not registered, 1 certificate did not identify owner, 1 insufficient ventilation, and 1 master could not produce certificate.

As Inspector of Cow-sheds and Dairies, I made 136 inspections of 26 cow-sheds and visited the places where milk is retailed.

Under the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts, I procured and submitted to the public analyst 45 samples for analysis.

Acting on the instructions of the Sanitary Authority, I took proceedings, with the aid of the Town Clerk, before the Borough Magistrates in respect of 5 samples; in each case a conviction was obtained, and fines amounting to £13 2s. and costs £2 18s. were inflicted.

The total number of inspections of all descriptions which I made during the year may be summarized under the following headings :—

Inspections of private premises	793
,, courts and alleys	3241
,, vans at fairs, &c.	126
,, canal boats	107
,, private slaughter-houses	288
,, public slaughter-houses	705
,, cow-sheds and dairies...	136
Visits paid to houses where measles existed	1017
Disinfection of houses	245
House drainage disinfected and cleansed	112
Total	6770

W. H. Roberton,
Inspector of Nuisances.